

# Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) for Substance Use Disorders

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# Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

- We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work in territories where Indigenous nations and Tribal groups are traditional stewards of the land.
- Please join us in supporting efforts to affirm Tribal sovereignty across what is now known as California and in displaying respect, honor and gratitude for all Indigenous people.

## Whose land are you on?

Option 1: Text your zip code to 1-855-917-5263

Option 2: Enter your location at <https://native-land.ca>

Option 3: Access Native Land website via QR Code:



# Pride Month 2022

**UCLA** Health

**STAND UP.  
BE WELL.  
BE YOU.**

**Pride 2022**



#OUTPROUDANDWELL

# Men's Health Month 2022

A photograph of four hikers with large backpacks standing on a grassy mountain ridge. They are looking out over a valley with rolling hills under a cloudy sky. The hikers are dressed in outdoor gear, including jackets and hats.

## Men's Health Month

Awareness  
Prevention  
Education  
Family

The use of affirming language inspires hope and advances recovery.

**LANGUAGE MATTERS.**

**Words have power.**

**PEOPLE FIRST.**

The ATTC Network uses affirming language to promote the promises of recovery by advancing evidence-based and culturally informed practices.



**ATTC**

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



University of California Los Angeles  
Integrated Substance Abuse Programs

# Disclosures

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# Learning Objectives

- ▶ At the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:
  - ▶ Distinguish the origins of DBT and the four (4) groups of skills utilized in DBT
  - ▶ Recall two (2) ways in which DBT skills can be useful for those in treatment for substance use disorders
  - ▶ Apply one (1) specific DBT Skill pertaining to Distress Tolerance





# Origins of DBT

- ▶ Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) is a form of cognitive behavior therapy created in the 1970s by Psychologist Dr. Marcia Linehan.
- ▶ DBT is an evidence-based treatment model that emphasizes skills-building to teach people how to live in the moment, develop healthy ways to cope with stress, regulate their emotions, and improve their relationships with others.
- ▶ It was originally developed to reduce suicide attempts and non-suicidal self-injurious behaviors. DBT was further adapted to treat Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). DBT is now also used to treat eating disorders, major depressive disorder, and anxiety.

# Origins of DBT

- ▶ Since its inception, DBT has shown favorable outcomes in treating addiction and substance use by diminishing cravings and mitigating impulsive and harmful behaviors.
- ▶ DBT skills training is typically delivered in a group format to target the enhancement of client capabilities.

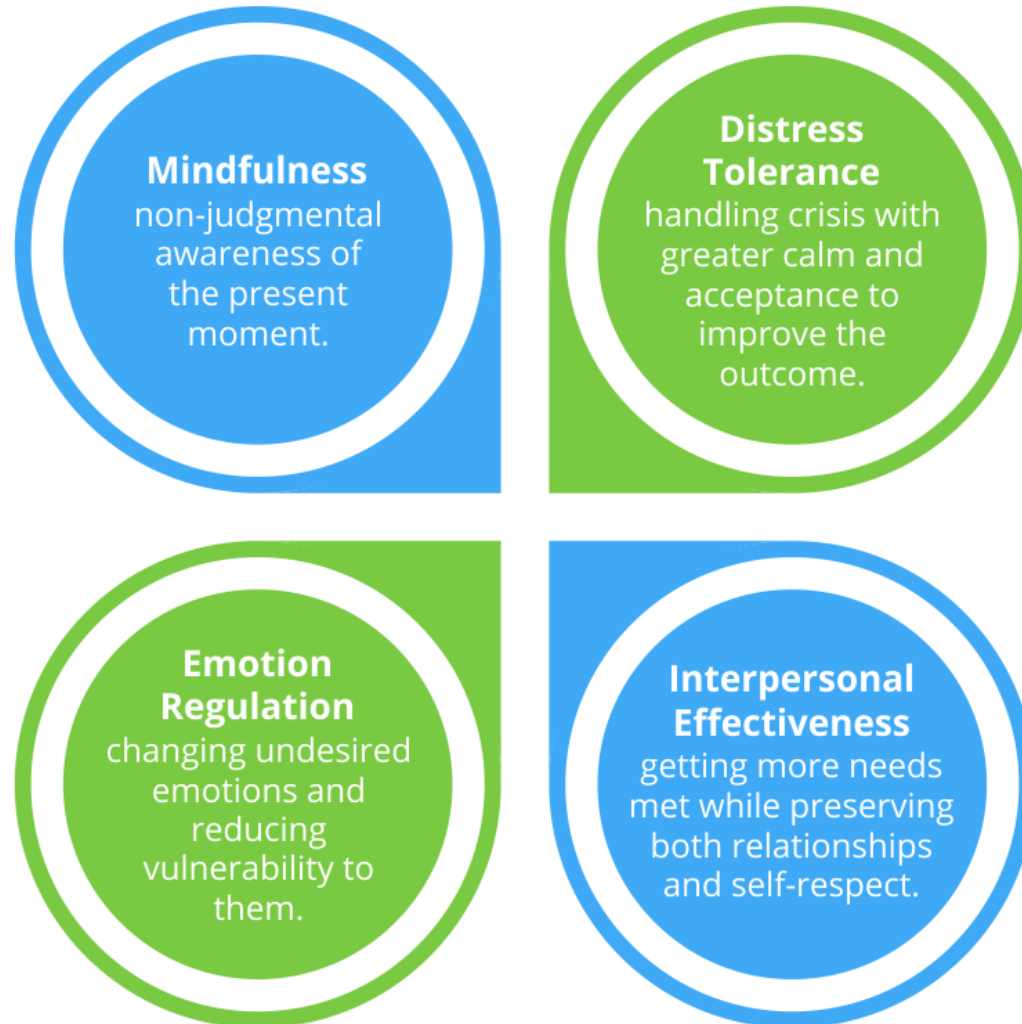


# The Four DBT Skills

- ▶ At its core, DBT helps people build four major skills:
  - ▶ Mindfulness
  - ▶ Emotional Regulation
  - ▶ Distress Tolerance
  - ▶ Interpersonal Effectiveness



# The Four DBT Skills



# DBT for Substance Use Disorders

- ▶ Research has shown that DBT can help those with Substance Use Disorders in several ways:
  - ▶ Mindfulness skills and practices help people be at peace with the present moment, whatever it may be
  - ▶ Distress tolerance skills give people a greater capacity to manage intense emotional experiences and stressors, thereby lessening the need to manage or escape them with substances
  - ▶ Interpersonal effectiveness and communication skills help people to more effectively communicate their experiences, needs, and boundaries, among other things
  - ▶ Emotional regulation skills help people cope with difficult emotions in healthy ways



# DBT for Substance Use Disorders

- ▶ DBT can also help those with Substance Use Disorders by:
  - ▶ Building positive self-image and confidence in one's own strengths and abilities, which is essential in maintaining abstinence in recovery
  - ▶ Helping to change the behaviors and environments that may put a person at risk for (re)lapse
  - ▶ Encouraging those in recovery to remove triggers for relapse, such as unhealthy relationships, drug paraphernalia, or places where substance misuse is common
  - ▶ Identifying, challenging, and addressing black and white thinking and catastrophizing, creating room for more nuanced thinking during stressful situations



# Distress Tolerance

- ▶ Distress Tolerance skills assist people handle crises with greater calm and acceptance to improve the outcome
- ▶ Distress Tolerance skills are helpful when:
  - ▶ Intense physical and/or emotional pain is present
  - ▶ Emotional pain is too strong, and it feels overwhelming
  - ▶ Strong urges to engage in impulsive behaviors are present



# ACCEPTS - A Distress Tolerance Skill

A Activities - Engage in any healthy activity. Some ideas: Read a book, exercise, call a friend, clean, cook a new recipe.

C Contributing - Do something kind for someone. For example, cook food for a friend or relative, mow the neighbor's lawn, send an encouraging text.

C Comparisons - Put your life in perspective. Ask yourself: Am I safe? Am I fed? Is there someone who cares about me?

E Emotions - Invoke the opposite emotion of your current feeling to reduce its intensity. If anxious, practice meditation. If sad, watch a funny video.

P Push Away - Push the problem out of your mind temporarily and set a time to come back to it. Distract yourself with other activities and get present.

T Thoughts - Replace negative, anxious thoughts with activities that keep the mind busy. For example, say the alphabet backwards or do a puzzle.

S Sensation - Use your 5 senses to self-soothe. Some ideas: Take a warm bath, light a candle, play relaxing music, eat a comforting snack.





# ACCEPTS - A Distress Tolerance Skill

## ACCEPTS

In the moment, distressing emotions may seem impossible to overcome. However, over time, these emotions will lessen in intensity, and eventually fade away. The acronym **ACCEPTS** outlines seven techniques for distracting yourself from distressing emotions until they pass.

### Activities

Do an activity that requires thought and concentration.

- Read a book.
- Write in a journal.
- Do a work project or school assignment.
- Play a sport.

### Contributing

Do something that allows you to focus on another person.

- Ask a friend about their day.
- Make a gift for a loved one.
- Volunteer.
- Send a thoughtful card.

### Comparisons

Put your situation in perspective by comparing it to something more painful or distressing.

- Think of a time when you were in more distress and realize how things are not as bad right now.
- Realize how resilient you are by thinking of someone who is coping less well than you are.

### Emotions

Do something to create a new emotion that will compete with your distressing emotion.

- Sad? Watch a happy movie.
- Anxious? Practice deep breathing.
- Angry? Go for a walk.

### Pushing away

Avoid a painful situation or block it from your mind using a technique such as imagery.

- Try to delay harmful urges for one hour. If the urge doesn't pass, put it off for another hour.
- Imagine putting your negative thoughts in a box, taping it shut, and putting it in the back of your closet.

### Thoughts

Use a mental strategy or an activity to shift your thoughts to something neutral.

- Starting with the letter "A," name objects around you that start with each letter of the alphabet.
- Count a specific object around you (e.g. bricks, trees...) • Sing a song out loud or recite it in your head.

### Sensations

Find safe physical sensations to distract you from distressing emotions.

- Hold an ice cube in your hand.
- Eat something sour or spicy.
- Take a cold shower.

## ACCEPTS

**Instructions:** Respond to the following prompts to create your own **ACCEPTS** plan for tolerating distress. Give responses that you would be likely to use.

What is a **distressing emotion** you would like to manage with **ACCEPTS**? \_\_\_\_\_

**Activities:** List activities requiring concentration that would distract from your distressing emotion.

**Contributing:** List activities that allow you to focus on others, instead of your distressing emotion.

**Comparisons:** Describe a time when you struggled with your distressing emotion, but showed resilience. Recall this experience when faced with the emotion again.

**Emotions:** How can you create a new emotion that competes with your distressing emotion?

**Pushing away:** What can you do to avoid thoughts and situations that create the distressing emotion?

**Thoughts:** List mental strategies or activities that would distract you from your distressing emotion.

**Sensations:** How can you create a safe physical sensation to distract from your distressing emotion?

# Other Distress Tolerance Skills

- ▶ The “TIP” Skill
- ▶ The “STOP” Skill
- ▶ The “Half-Smile” technique
- ▶ The “Willing Hands” Technique
- ▶ Radical Acceptance



# A Note on Distress Tolerance Skills

- ▶ Potential to be overused and practiced as an avoidance technique
  - ▶ Distress Tolerance skills should be combined with problem-solving
  - ▶ If the problem causing the crisis cannot be solved or some time must elapse before problem-solving can occur, it's important to cope with the emotions that arise using emotional regulation skills



# Additional Learning

